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A Cultural Resources Survey of a Proposed Scour Repair on the St. Francis River near Piggott, Clay County, Arkansas - A Negative Finding Report.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Memphis District

Jimmy McNeil
Staff Archeologist

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February 1984

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Abstract

On 25 January 1984, an intensive cultural resources survey was conducted by the Environmental Branch of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, by staff archeologist, Mr. Jimmy McNeil, over approximately 3.6 acres.

The proposed project is the repair of a scour area along the St. Francis River. The repair process will include grading the top bank and bank scour area to a stable angle of repose and then depositing stone fill over this area. The project is located in the north 1/2, southwest 1/4 of Township 20N, Range 9E, Section 11 of the Piggott, Arkansas Quadrangle, Clay County, Arkansas.

A records search and a pedestrian survey failed to locate any prehistoric, historic or architectural sites within the project right-of-way.

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Map

Vicinity and Project Map

Introduction

An intensive survey for cultural resources was conducted by Memphis District archeologist, Mr. Jimmy McNeil, on 25 January 1984, within the project right-of-way as directed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District. This study was performed as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190), Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR 800), and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (Public Law 898-665).

Project Description

The proposed project is located in the north 1/2, southwest 1/4 of Township 20N, Range 9E, Section 11 of the Piggott, Arkansas Quadrangle Map (see attached Map). The proposed project is the repair of a scour area along the right descending bank of the St. Francis River, between river mile 9/4+50 to 9/11+00. The repair process will include grading the top bank and bank scour area to a stable angle of repose and then depositing stone fill over this area. The stone fill will stop the erosion of the bank area. The materials removed from top bank will be deposited within the project right-of-way.

Environmental Setting

The project area falls within the Western Lowland Division of the Mississippi Alluvial Valley Physiographic Province of northeast Arkansas.

The topography is flat to undulating, with low ridges or natural levees rising a few feet above the alluvial terrace. These lowlands are characterized primarily by poorly drained clay soils. The area topography is generally level to moderately sloping upland. Bottomland topography ranges from broad areas to swales and low ridges. Slopes are generally less than 4%. Drainage is generally to the southwest. Generally, this area is well-drained through a system of natural and artificial channels.

Natural vegetation in the impact area is limited to a few trees in a narrow intermittent strip along the river. These are mostly mid-successional species and include river birch (Betula nigra), cottonwood (Populus deltoides), silver maple (Acer saccharinum) and American elm (Ulmus americana).

Results of Records Search

The National Register of Historic Places has been consulted and it was determined that there are no properties currently listed in the Register which will be affected by the work.

The Arkansas Archeological Survey was consulted and no archeological sites are on file in the Registrar's Office permanent records for this section.

Previous Research

Enough work has been conducted in the general area of the project, by

such researchers as Phillips, Ford and Griffin (1951), Williams (1956), Morse (1969), Lewis (1974), and Klinger (1978), to isolate and date major cultural periods. However, little survey research has been conducted in the immediate vicinity of the project.

Survey Methodology and Results

The area to be surveyed had been plowed and left for several months. Thus, rain and snow had fallen on the area. Ground visibility was 100%. The entire area was walked over and the exposed ground surface searched for artifacts and/or feature-like stains. None were found. At three locations (approximately 30 meters apart) the river bank was profiled. These profiles showed the first 10 cm. to be sand, the remaining 80 cm. was clayey-sand. The profiles did not show any indication of buried cultural strata.

Recommendations

Based on an infield cultural resources survey and a background records search, no evidence of prehistoric, historic or architectural resources exist within the direct impact zone of the project.

The survey methodology used does not eliminate the possibility of encountering deeply buried sites. Therefore, it is recommended that any site encountered during construction be protected from further damage by stopping construction until its significance can be determined by the Environmental Branch, Memphis District Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Arkansas Office of Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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PIGGOTT QUADRANGLE
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(Malden)

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